



# Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **FEDERAL JURY FINDS ARMED CAREER CRIMINAL GUILTY OF FIREARM POSSESSION CHARGE**

Orlando, Florida - Today a jury in U.S. District Court in Orlando found Donald Ray Harris, age 50, of Mims, Florida, guilty of possession of a firearm and ammunition by a convicted felon. Harris faces a minimum mandatory fifteen years' imprisonment up to life imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. The sentencing hearing is scheduled for October 1, 2007, before the Honorable Anne C. Conway, United States District Judge. Harris was indicted on May 2, 2007.

According to the evidence presented at trial, Harris was stopped as he drove a truck through a rural neighborhood in Mims. A witness earlier had seen Harris shooting a semi-automatic rifle at a residence in the neighborhood; after hearing gunshots, another witness had placed a 911 call to summon authorities. A responding Brevard County Sheriff's Office deputy pursued Harris's vehicle, arrested Harris and discovered a loaded AK-47 style rifle on the driver-side floorboard of the truck. As a previously convicted felon, Harris is prohibited under federal law from possessing a firearm or ammunition.

The case represents the culmination of a cooperative effort between the United States Attorney's Office, the State Attorney's Office for Brevard/Seminole Counties, the Brevard County Sheriff's Office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives ("ATF"). This is another case prosecuted as a part the Department of Justice program "Project Safe Neighborhoods" - a nationwide gun violence reduction initiative with

strong support from ATF. Acting United States Attorney James R. Klindt is coordinating the cooperative effort here in the Middle District of Florida with federal, state and local law enforcement officials. In Brevard County, State Attorney Norm Wolfinger is calling the initiative "Operation Cease Fire." The objective is to reduce violent crime by locating and seizing unlawfully possessed guns and then swiftly prosecuting the offenders using both federal and state gun laws.

The case was prosecuted by Special Assistant United States Attorney Craig S. Forrester, of the Brevard County State Attorney's Office, and Assistant United States Attorney Robert E. Bodnar, Jr.